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Alien Center Director Defends Operations Of Camps for Japs

Charges of 'Coddling' In Arkansas Sites Brings Denial

By the Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Jan. 9.—Denying any attempt to "coddle the Japanese Americans" in two Southeast Arkansas relocation camps, Regional Director E. B. Whitaker of the War Relocation Authority asserted tonight no one in charge of the centers "had any idea that they were Utopias."

The Average American's idea of a Utopia certainly would not be a place where families eat in mess halls and where military police guard the community, keeping outsiders out and insiders in," Mr. Whitaker said in a prepared statement answering recent published descriptions of conditions at the Jerome camp.

Mr. Whitaker is in charge of the Jerome and Rohwer camps in each of which are located approximately 4,000 Japanese, many American born, from the Pacific Coast and Hawaii.

Doesn't Claim Perfect Job.

"We do not claim we are doing a perfect job," Mr. Whitaker said, "but we do contend that the general public in passing judgment on WRA, should keep in mind that the evacuees are living in a different section of the country than they have been accustomed to. Weather,

working and living conditions are vastly changed for these people.

"Nobody should expect a person to change overnight from an office worker or a merchant to a woodsman and farmer, regardless of his race or color."

Mr. Whitaker said there was "some confusion" in the centers and "some ill feeling between the Japanese evacuees and the Caucasian labor working on construction" but said "the cases are isolated, not general."

Construction Delayed.

He said that due to circumstances "for which no one is to be blamed" the contractor has taken twice as long to complete the camp as planned and the project still was not complete.

Mr. Whitaker added that camp schools were not opened until January because buildings were not completed, but teachers who were on the payroll prior to that time were given other tasks. He said

there were 2,317 school children at Jerome.

The evacuees' diet consists principally of fish and rice, Mr. Whitaker said, and the November food costs were 25.5 cents per day per person.

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